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The Piano-Yoga®

by yogi times

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“ To live in the past is how we miss being here, which is the only reality. ”

- Byron Katie

An Holistic Approach to Piano Learning

Piano-Yoga® is a mutli-dimensional method of **playing**, performing and teaching piano. This fairly new method, founded by GÉNIA, a Russian virtuoso pianist, combines the fundamentals of Russian piano schools with Eastern philosophies, particularly yoga.

Creating an optimal **environment** which promotes a student's sense of well-being is GÉNIA's best approach to learning the piano. "When we feel relaxed, think positively and our concentration is at its peak, we can learn more quickly and efficiently," she explains. In this state, learning can feel like having fun—where studying and mastering something new become an effortless and pleasurable experience.

It is true that some of the best educational systems (like the Russian school, for example) are based on a strict, disciplined approach to learning, where competition is the upmost motivation for success and the strongest students are stretched to the maximum. Such systems have produced amazing results, but the weakest emotionally often give up, unable to progress and develop.

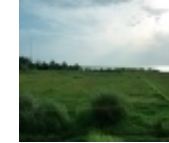
Piano-Yoga® is a method which aims to help students perfect their technique with a foremost motivation to make the piano playing process as enjoyable and pleasurable as possible, within the wider framework of the student's lifestyle. In order to do this not only do GÉNIA and her team instruct students specifically in the Piano-Yoga® technique, but they also show them how to efficiently schedule their practice sessions, and how to take care of their health and their body in order to get the most out of their practice and create a positive mindset.

GÉNIA likes to address this issue by using ideas taken from ancient Indian Ayurvedic philosophy—the traditional Hindu system of medicine, based on the idea of bringing balance to the body using diet, herbal treatments, yogic postures and breathing. In line with the discipline of Ayurveda she asks students to pay attention to what they eat, monitor how they feel each day, and, if they are not happy with the results, she teaches them how to change their sense of well-being, correcting it through various exercises: simple posture adjustments and the use of aromatherapy. GÉNIA encourages the students to create a practice environment full of clean energy, where they can feel comfortable, safe, and nurtured.

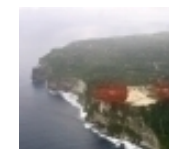


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Here are some of the Piano-Yoga method that you can try for yourself—a few tips you can do over the course of one week:

Notice when your energy is at its best and try to practise at that time

Are you a morning or evening person? Is the afternoon the best or the worst time for you? Try to practice when your brain is at its best and your muscles are not stiff.

Find out if there is a regular time you can practice and, if possible, stick to it.

Getting into a routine will help the body to feel comfortable in its environment and will enable you to concentrate faster and more acutely.

Try not to practice on an empty stomach, but also not on a full one. According to how you feel, use the main principles of Ayurveda.

According to Ayurvedic principles a person can either be TAMASIC (sluggish/slow), RAJASIC (hyperactive/fast) or SATTVIC (balanced) depending on their current state of mind. If you are feeling unsettled you will most certainly be feeling either tamasic or rajasic and therefore should aim to bring yourself back into a Sattvic (balanced) state.

Decide how you are feeling at this present moment: TAMASIC or RAJASIC?

For people in TAMASIC (sluggish/slow) state they recommend:

Going for a brisk walk before practice, if possible. Playing the piano at a moderate or fast tempo but not too slowly!

Eating a moderate amount of RAJASIC foods before practice to induce more energy into your system (chocolate, tea, coffee (but not too much of these, otherwise you may find yourself in a rajasic state) as well as fish, eggs, chilli peppers and strongly-flavored herbs and spices to help bring yourself into a state of balance. Do some physical exercise. Yoga is excellent as long as it is a vinyasa sequence (dynamic flowing yoga practice). This encourages better blood circulation and warms up the muscles.

For people in a RAJASIC (hyperactive/nervous) state they would recommend:

Going for a slow walk or doing some simple slow stretches, mainly with forward bends (make sure that you do not have any back issues and know how to do stretches



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safely). Playing everything on the piano slower than usual. Eat some TAMASIC food before the practice time to induce a calming effect on the body (i.e. meat, cooked vegetables, mushrooms, dried, tinned and frozen fruit).

Practicing slow, deep breathing as it has an excellent calming effect on the body. (The yogic breath technique of Ujjayi is particularly good if you are familiar with it – otherwise seek out an initial guidance from a qualified yoga teacher). Try to meditate and rest more between short practice sessions.

Make sure that you feel comfortable in your environment

In the morning have plenty of fresh air in the room (no dust, as not only is it bad for your health, but it is terrible for the energy of the place). In the evening make sure that the room is warm and well lit, but that the lights are not too bright, as this can make you feel tired.

Do some physical exercises before your piano practice

Doing some physical work can do wonders for your body and mind. Either walking, running, yoga, pilates or swimming: anything that keeps your body alive, well toned and oxygenated. 10–15 minutes of exercise before your piano practice can dramatically improve your playing and your ability to concentrate!

Have some fluids by your side

Preferably have some water (ideally at room temperature, unless you feel hot) or some tea (herbal would be the best, but if you are feeling tired sometimes black tea or coffee can help—make sure that these do not make you too over-active).

Use aromatherapy

Before embarking on the use of aromatherapy, GÉNIA strongly suggests that you do some homework. Find out what oils and smells you like and how they make you feel. The oils could either be applied to your skin as a cream or used as a room spray or in oil burners.

You really need to know what products you are using and which method is the most effective for you, as it can create a very strong effect and this can really elevate your mood, improve your concentration or simply make you feel happier!

You can make your own product by filling a glass bottle with water and add various oils that you like; they usually change with seasons, the time of day and your mood, hence

you can prepare many different bottles. Use a diffuser. GÉNIA's favorite morning mix is a combination of cypress, lemon grass, peppermint and lime.

Below are a few examples of how different oils can help you, but you need to choose what works best for you. There are endless possibilities for creating various smells.

Bergamot helps to fight anxiety, confusion, depression, relieve headaches, and reduce irritability and stress.

Pepper is great for fighting apathy, relieving colds, cramps, flu, muscle ache, shock, creating calm and boosting energy.

Ylang-ylang helps to fight depression, stress, improve sleep and enhance mood.

Rose helps with anxiety, depression and fear, creating nurturing and positive feelings.

Clary Sage helps to fight hyperactivity, improve sleep, avoid panic attacks, and induce peace of mind.

Try to pay attention to these few ideas and see how they can improve your practice! GÉNIA mentions also that it is essential to have a clear goal (know what you would like to achieve from each practice session) and maintain a planned practice process. Set up an environment of peace during your sessions, and always approach your **practice** thinking constructively: don't see problems, only solutions!

**Take a deeper look at what is Piano-Yoga[®] and the holistic approach to piano learning | piano-yoga.com*

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